quite impossible to exclude from reservation all lands within a radius of 4 miles from existing dwelling houses as there would be very little reserve left if this suggestion were to be followed. This view seems to be right. But every care will be taken to keep reserves as far away from human habitations as possible.

118. Desirability of not giving fresh lands for rubber cultivation to outsiders in preference to natives.

Mr. Aiyappan Pillai and Mr. Kuruvila Devasya (Minachil) brought forward this subject.

Reply.—No preference is ever shown to one class of applicants as against another. When it is considered advisable to part with Government lands for rubber cultivation, they will be sold to outsiders or natives without distinction. But it so happens that applications from the latter are rare.

119. Scantiness of rain on account of the clearing of large areas of forest lands for rubber and other cultivation.

Mr. R. Narayana Iyer and Mr. Kanakku Parameswaran Krishnan (Kottarakara) pointed out that one result of the indiscriminate grant of forest lands for rubber and other cultivation to European planters was a steady decrease in rainfall and prayed that in future no more lands be sold or permitted to be cleared for planting purposes in the State.

Reply.—This is a controversial question. Dr. Ribbentrop is of one opinion in this matter, but our Conservator differing from him thinks that the clearing of forests conduces to increased rainfall, that the destruction of forests in many countries has been followed by the occurrence of floods and that the only effect of forests on rainfull is to secure evenness. I called for a statement of rainfall in the State for the last forty years, but statistics were available only for twenty. The figures vary and do not seem to warrant any safe conclusion. They have however been put into the hands of the Conservator and the Superintendent of the Agricultural Demonstration Farm, for report as to whether any and what inference could be drawn from them. In that connection, due consideration will be given to the opinion now expressed.

120. Abolition of duty on firewood.

Mr. V. Sankaranarayana Iyer, B. A., B. L., (Agastisvaram)

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